



State of Arizona

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Governor Jan Brewer Applauds Selection of Contractor in Forest Thinning Project

Largest Stewardship Project in USFS History will Reduce Fire Danger, Aid Forest Health

FLAGSTAFF – Governor Jan Brewer today joined federal officials to announce a contractor has been chosen to begin forest-thinning efforts as part of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI).

"With the destruction of last summer's wildfires still fresh in our minds – and in light of the severe beginning to this year's fire season – today's news could not have come to Arizona at a better time," said Governor Brewer. "Though we cannot undo the damage of last year's Wallow, Horseshoe II, Monument and other fires, we can work to lessen the destruction from future blazes. Today's selection of a contractor to begin this widespread thinning effort marks the first step toward restoring our forests, protecting our communities and salvaging our rural economy."

As part of this contract – the largest in U.S. Forest Service history – 300,000 acres of the Coconino National Forest will be thinned over the next decade in order to reduce the likelihood of devastating wildfires. In total, 4FRI calls for the treatment of 2.4 million acres over 20 years across the Coconino, Kaibab, Apache-Sitgreaves and Tonto national forests of northern Arizona.

"This is an enormous step in restoring the health and sustainability of our forests," said Earl Stewart, Coconino National Forest Supervisor. "This contract will help us achieve the goal of setting our forests and economies on a path of recovery."

During last year's fire season, approximately 1 million acres burned statewide – including the Wallow Fire, the largest in Arizona State history. The wildfires were just the latest reminder of the need to use strategic thinning in order to return overgrown forests to a more natural state.

Also today, Governor Brewer conducted an aerial tour of the Gladiator and Sunflower fires in northern Arizona, and received a briefing from State Forester Scott Hunt and USFS Incident Commanders leading the firefighting effort.

"There are more than 600 personnel from 14 states working the Gladiator Fire alone, so the people of Crown King and the surrounding area should know that significant resources are being brought to bear on this fire," said Governor Brewer. "The rugged terrain and dry, windy conditions make this a dangerous situation, but I commit that the State of Arizona will do everything possible to assist the U.S. Forest Service in bringing the Gladiator and other wildfires under control."

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